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The dynsi- 123
ness of my dance steps was politely ignored and when my hair grew [302]
too long, some friendly neighbor would tell me that it was the custom
in their village for respectable women to keep their hair short.

It is therefore to those friends in Alor, to their shrewd but tolerant 005-
acceptance of my peculiarities and to their vigorous engrossment in
their own affairs that any contributions which this volume may make
to an understanding of the varieties of human character are primarily
due.

To the kindness and interest of many other persons I am also indebted, since no ethnographer undertakes field work without making many new friendships and incurring innumerable obligations to both new friends and old ones. The work reported in this volume is no exception. My greatest obligations for both intellectual stimulus over a number of years and financial assistance on this field trip are gratefully acknowledged to Dr. A. Kardiner. To Dr. Ruth Benedict, who made possible the professional backing and financial support of the Social Science Research Council of Columbia University, I am again indebted as I have been so frequently in the course of professional work. Dr. Ralph Linton was kind enough to place at my disposal his joint seminar with Dr. Kardiner during the winter of 1939–40. The spirited discussion of field data by this group is a debt difficult to acknowledge adequately.

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Dr. Margaret Mead, Dr. Gregory Bateson, and Dr. Bruno Klopfer provided encouragement and guidance. Dr. Porteus gave unstintingly 125
of his time and interest in evaluating the maze test which bears his name.

To Dr. Emil Oberholzer no adequate acknowledgment can be made

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Rilpada the Seer.

Malelaka the Prophet.

Fanemi Longbair, brother of the musician.

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Manifani, a financier from Dikimpe.

An Alorese youth.

A young widow much admired in Atimelang for her beauty.

[illegible]

A young girl whose teeth have just been blackened and filed. Her molars are occluded.

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design is first traced on her forehead or cheek and is then pricked in with a thorn dipped in charcoal. The procedure usually draws a number of girls and adult women, all of whom discuss animatedly which of a limited number of simple designs will be used. Often a little girl who has taken no initiative in the matter will be urged by a friend or adult to undergo the operation. Beauty is the only objective.

It is a tradition to insist that the operation does not hurt, and when I asked a girl who had just had the task completed whether it was painful, older women answered before she was able to, assuring me that it was not. On one occasion some older women, by way of teasing the child's grandmother, urged a little girl of seven to let herself be tattooed. The grandmother arrived just in time to prevent the scheme from being carried out. She was very indignant that her grandchild should have been cajoled into it when she was obviously so young. In relation to a discussion of skills and craftsmanship which will come later, it should be stated that the tattooing process is often very crude and usually impermanent, so that traces of designs are rarely distinguishable on the faces of middle-aged women.

GROWING UP FOR BOYS

Whereas girls are tattooed from approximately ten to fourteen, the comparable badge of adulthood for boys, i.e., long hair, does not come until somewhat later, at ages I should estimate from sixteen to eighteen. When boys begin to let their hair grow long, they also begin borrowing or acquiring male accouterments. These are dwelt upon in loving detail in many myths and consist of a sword, a front shield, a back shield, a parrying shield, a bow, a wide belt of woven rattan that serves as a quiver, an areca basket with bells, and the tubular, areca-bark hair cylinder with the accompanying combs and head plumes. Naturally, a young man rarely succeeds in borrowing or acquiring all these articles at first, but he gets as many as he can and struts about in them, often followed by the half-admiring, half-derisive comments of older women and girls. There is a special expression for the type of laughter that women direct toward a young man, which I can translate only by our word *hoot*. Its character is as unmistakable as the laughter that accompanies the telling of smutty jokes in our culture. A young man of about twenty himself described in the following words this attitude and the associated courting interests of both boys and girls.

"When a lot of women get together to work in the fields or to fetch water, they talk and talk. When you hear them hoot, that means they are talking about a man. Maybe one girl says she likes a certain man and intends to sleep with him